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ABSTRACT

Staff development in the public schools has become a serious concern only since the 1970s. Staff development is not inservice education, although it includes inservice teacher education. Rather, staff development should be a process by both administrators and teachers who set goals to improve the school or school system and meet the needs of individual staff members while carrying out needed changes. From a review of literature on staff development, one may conclude that staff development efforts should be guided by clear, straightforward goals. Moreover, these goals should be determined at least in part by those whose lives will be affected by intended outcomes. According to Monette, four questions should be considered by staff development planners. These questions are (1) Who can best perceive professional needs? (2) To what extent do selected needs pertain to individuals and to the system? (3) How can staff development planners prepare themselves to deal with shifting needs? (4) What critical relationship exists between needs and the operational philosophy of the institution? Answers to these questions may well determine which attitudes toward organizational growth and development will prevail. If nothing else, a careful analysis of needs may yield to planners' insights that can improve instructional and administrative performance. Staff development personnel have the power to wield either the carrot or the stick. Which one they choose is, in large measure, a function of their understanding of human nature. (KC)

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT: THE CARROT OR THE STICK?

by

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One of the primary methods of retraining professional educators is through inservice education. There is widespread agreement that the purpose of inservice education is to improve the general quality of schooling for the participants. Little agreement exists, however, on which criteria or guiding principles lead to effective staff development.

One explanation for the scarcity of theoretical foundations is that staff development in public schools is a relatively new phenomenon. Bruce (1979) perceives staff development as a "qualitative revolution" that only dates back to the late 1970s both in England and America. This qualitative revolution, he states, marks a significant change in attitudes on staff development from "teacher training" to "teacher education."

Clark and Siedman (1980) view inservice education as the continuous and directed effort of personnel to solve the problems of a school system. Inservice should therefore address emerging issues which can significantly affect the educational process. Two important aspects of inservice are implied in the authors' description. These aspects are relevancy and responsiveness to participant needs. According to Clark and Siedman, those involved in the process are best able to contribute to their own growth and development.

Fiske (1983) supports the concept of participant-centered inservice education. He suggests that staff development may hold the key to higher morale among educators. Hersey and Blanchard (1977) contend that morale is partly a function of worker maturity. Maturity is composed of two interrelated factors: skill and willingness to take responsibility. The challenge to inservice planners, then, lies in finding ways to create conditions that will induce personnel to set realistic goals and to take responsibility for the achievement of their goals.

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Accordingly, the intent of inservice is twofold. It seeks to improve decisior making and to increase both the influence and the options of participants. Clark and Siedman (1980) perceive these goals to be mutually supportive. Yet, they assert, "institutional and individual goals in the public schools have never been less congruent" (p. 34).

Concern over the difficulties of mutual goal setting is also expressed by Fiedler and Chemers (1974). They state, "The question of how we can get people to cooperate on a common task for the purpose of achieving a shared goal has always been a major problem for mankind" (Preface). Staff development planners continually experience this problem as they seek ways of increasing the ability of teachers and administrators to contribute more directly to the effective operation of public schools.

One way for staffers to align individual and institutional goals, according to Clark and Siedman, is to recognize the differentiated needs of personnel. When inservice is limited to teachers, school districts lose an opportunity to engage administrators in change at the grass roots level. Yet, as the literature reveals, administrators play a key role in instituting change.

One of the major tasks of school administrators, according to Goodlad (1973), is to assess individual classroom practices within the total instructional plan. Moreover, this plan should reflect the larger system-wide agreement of what the institution intends to do. It is the school system that generally has the need, Bigelow (1968) contends, ". . . and that is where the action must begin" (p. 53).

Cunningham (1961) asserts that the responsibility for initiating change rests heavily with administrators. "It is the administrator," Cunningham states, "who must define the role expectations of teachers involved in change in order to reduce conflict between personality needs of the individual and role expectations of the organizations" (p. 121).

Goodstein (1978) suggests that change in an institution is most likely to occur when it is encouraged from the top down. He perceives staff development primarily as a means of assisting administrators to develop a climate receptive to change. Staff development must therefore involve more than the specific training of an individual merely for one type of performance.

Monette (1977) supports the concept of collaborative decision making between administrators and teachers. Pfiffner and Fels (1964) suggest that educational change should stem from a two-way contract. This contract should reflect institutional expectations while it responds to the needs of individual staff members.

A distinction between staff development and inservice training should be drawn at this point. Although these terms are frequently interchanged, they denote two aspects of professional growth. Goodstein (1978) stipulates that staff development is pervasive. It encompasses all professional growth activities which meet the needs of individuals within the educational context. Stoner (1978) adds that staff development is designed to educate personnel beyond the requirements of their present position. He includes under the title staff development such activities as (a) general professional activities, (b) career/ credential activities, (c) job-related activities, and (d) personal development.

Inservice training, on the other hand, concentrates on the more immediate objective of improving on-the-job performance (Goodstein, 1978). Inservice training is a component of staff development. Department meetings and task-oriented workshops are examples of ongoing inservice activities. Both inservice and staff development, however, seek to produce change within the organizational climate.

Likert (1967) identifies six processes within the organizational structure that are potentially responsive to change. These processes are: communications, goal-setting, decision making, interaction/influence processes, motivation and control, and performance appraisal. The author contends that cross relationships between and among these processes are such

that change in one area will produce change in other areas. Staff development therefore seems to be a logical place to identify, address, and improve educators' competencies in terms of the requirements of their employment (Caldwell, 1979).

Kozmetsky (1980) is especially concerned with goal-setting and interaction processes. He speaks of the correlation that exists between administrative development and subsequent instructional development. Successful institutions, he states, must meet two requirements. First they must select objectives that will produce change in the institution itself. Then they must incorporate the development needs of their faculty into their action plan.

Bigelow (1968) is more succinct. Referring to the change process and those involved in it, he suggests that school districts draft careful "shopping lists" of what they need (p. 53). These lists should become blueprints for inservice activities. Without such blueprints, he contends, educational personnel allow themselves to become victims of runaway change.

Whether they are perceived as shopping lists or blueprints, educational needs are prime determinants of staff development programs. Needs, however, are very complicated things. Monette (1977) urges us to consider them as bio-psychological states of deficiency. As such, they create tensions which cause gratification-seeking behaviors. These behaviors are the stuff that successful inservice programs build upon.

Atwood and Ellis (1971) do not dispute demonstrated correlations between needs and motivation. They caution planners, however, to differentiate between felt needs, symptomatic needs, and real educational needs. Knox (1968) distinguishes between needs and interests, stipulating that it is the element of choice between alternatives that differentiates interests from needs. Accordingly, Jones and Sommers (1975) advocate a needs assessment procedure which also tests the validity of the choice of variables.

The failure of many staff development programs to negotiate their way through the plethora of needs accounts for numerous, uncoordinated, and therefore, ineffective attempts to re-educate personnel. The problem is compounded when planners neglect to consider the role their institution plays in creating and satisfying needs. Without a philosophical screen to sift various individual, group, and institutional needs, staff development programs become little more than piecemeal prescriptions. Self-directed personnel may be able to patch together a number of meaningful experiences. Others, however, generally become suspicious of goals they did not choose or do not understand. They see the stick rather than the carrot. Mann (1978) labels this reaction a defensive characteristic of nonvolunteer audiences.

One may conclude that staff development efforts should be guided by clear, straightforward goals. Moreover, these goals should be determined at least in part by those whose lives will be affected by intended outcomes. If we are serious about quality control in staff development, we need to raise the expectation that it can serve a very important function. Accordingly, Monette (1977) identifies four questions that should be considered by staff development planners. These questions are:

1. Who can best perceive professional needs?
2. To what extent do selected needs pertain (a) to individuals and (b) to the system?
3. How can staff development planners prepare themselves to deal with shifting needs?
4. What critical relationship exists between needs and the operational philosophy of the institution?

Answers to these questions may well determine which attitudes will prevail toward organizational growth and development. If nothing else, a careful analysis of needs may yield to planners insights that can improve instructional and administrative performance.

Staff Development personnel have the power to wield either the carrot or the stick. Which one they ultimately choose is, in large measure, a function of their understanding of human nature.

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